

NEWS RELEASE RR04: **19 August 2019**

River Rede Restoration Work Starts at Smoutel Ford

River restoration work starts this week at Smoutel Ford, West Woodburn. Revitalising Redesdale Partnership will rebuild the historic bridleway across the Rede valley, allowing walkers and riders to enjoy trails between Monkridge Hill and Otterburn for the first time in decades.

The river crossing at Smoutel Ford was lost because so much stone and gravel was removed from the river during the 1950s. Revitalising Redesdale's work will reintroduce about 1400 tonnes of boulder and cobble sized stone to the river bed to create the Ford and associated features. The aim is to reinvigorate the river flow in this over-deepened part of the channel. This will provide healthier habitat for fish, river flies and our iconic Rede species, the endangered freshwater pearl mussel.

The contractor team, led by Groundwork North East & Cumbria, have developed the project with strong support from local landowners. The project has been made possible with funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Environment Agency and Northumberland County Council, through an active partnership led by Natural England and Northumberland Wildlife Trust.

This work will restore the Rede along one of the most degraded stretches where there are not enough gravels upstream to sustain the natural riverbed. As well as improving access for people across the river, this action will benefit river ecology beyond the 300m restored length. The Smoutel Ford project will be completed in October 2019 with further associated work planned for 2020. Additional riverside projects are taking place across the catchment as part of Revitalising Redesdale Programme 2018-2023. Together they aim to protect and enhance the area's landscape for wildlife and people.

For more details please contact Nick Lightfoot, Programme Officer info@revitalisingredesdale.org.uk
Tel: 02080261194, or visit our website www.revitalisingredesdale.org.uk to find out more about Revitalising Redesdale, volunteering opportunities and events.



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Notes to editors:

For more images, interviews and information about Revitalising Redesdale, contact info@revitalisingredesdale.org.uk

Photo caption:

1) River Rede View Towards Otterburn

Our website is www.revitalisingredesdale.org.uk. Follow us on Twitter @OurRedesdale and Facebook @revitalisingredesdale to find out more.

About Revitalising Redesdale

Redesdale is a remote upland area of west Northumberland which adjoins the Anglo- Scottish border at Carter Bar on the A68. As a frontier and strategic corridor, Redesdale has been shaped by centuries of conflict since Roman times. This is Border Reiver country where allegiances were to family rather than country or crown. The valley's history shaped the landscape and its people resulting in a modern day sense of wilderness and leaving a rich, but increasingly threatened legacy of natural, built and cultural heritage

Revitalising Redesdale cover the entire catchment of the river Rede, a 347 km² area that stretches from Carter Bar to Redesmouth on the confluence with the River Tyne. Support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund will enable the Revitalising Redesdale to deliver a £2.8 million programme of 12 inter-linking projects from 2018-2022 to deliver a lasting legacy that will seek to reinforce the special character and identity of Redesdale and its communities. Our programme will:

- ❖ Deliver improvements to habitats across Redesdale to enhance wider habitat connectivity and enhance its resilience to external pressures, including climate change.
- ❖ Create a pool of trained volunteers, living within the valley or the surrounding area, who will be engaged and interested in continuing to be involved in conserving and enhancing the heritage of the valley.
- ❖ Leave historic monuments and archaeological sites in a better condition and have management plans in place to maintain their condition.
- ❖ Instigate ecological, archaeological and history research projects will ensure that important sites in the valley have been recorded on regional databases to protect them in the future.

- ❖ Provide new interpretative material and develop promoted walking routes around village hubs to encourage more visitors and local people to explore Redesdale and its heritage for themselves.
- ❖ Develop Redesdale as a visitor destination and stop-off point on the way to and from Scotland

The Partnership consists of the following organisations: Natural England, Northumberland National Park Authority, Northumberland Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (Ministry of Defence), Tyne Rivers Trust, the Battlefields Trust, the Redesdale Society, Otterburn Parish Council, Rochester with Byrness Parish Council, Corsenside Parish Council, Elsdon Parish Council and Northumbrian Water.

Office:

Revitalising Redesdale Landscape Partnership, Northumberland Wildlife Trust Ltd, The Garden House, St Nicholas Park, Jubilee Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 3XT

About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we **Inspire, lead** and **resource** the UK’s heritage to create **positive and lasting change** for people and communities, now and in the future.

www.HeritageFund.org.uk.

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Further information about the River Rede

The River Rede rises at the Scottish Border at Carter Bar and flows south east to the confluence with the North Tyne near Bellingham. The landscape is largely rural upland with meandering and braided river systems supporting rare species such as pearl mussels. Upper reaches are influenced by commercial forestry and Catcleugh reservoir. The catchment is characterised by small communities such as Otterburn, Rochester, Elsdon and West and East Woodburn; tributaries include Cottonhope Burn, Blakehope Burn, Otter burn and Elsdon Burn. Designations include Northumberland National Park and small areas of the Border Mires SAC. [Catchment Summary for the Tyne](#) , 2014.

At Smoutel, given that the dredging took place in excess of 50 years ago, the recovery of the dredged reach has been remarkably slow and suggests that the observed stone and large gravel sediment supply from upstream should be considered as part of any restoration works.

The river becomes increasingly uniform, lacking natural features, downstream of the confluence with the Miller Burn and upstream of East Woodburn. Reducing connectivity of a river with its floodplain (most often by dredging and /or embankment creation) inhibits natural river processes. This is observable along parts of the River Rede.

(AECOM Geomorphological Consultants, 2017)